

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 2, line 4, as follows:

Jpn. Pat. Appln. KOKAI Publication No. 07-213586 discloses an automatic specimen container supply apparatus. This apparatus is capable of removing specimen containers (test tubes), which are arranged in a hopper, one by one using a rotary drum. The rotary drum is located at the bottom of the hopper and is provided with a groove for removing the specimen containers.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 8, line 14, as follows:

Referring back to FIGS. 1 and 2, a container carry-out mechanism ~~30~~ has an outlet 31 on its one sidewall 15, as described above. The outlet 31 is used to discharge the specimen containers 1, which are lifted up by the container individually-sending mechanism 20, outside the container-storing box 10. A specimen container-discharging guide section 32 is coupled to the outlet 31. The guide section 32 includes a guide plate 32a provided at a section coupled to the outlet 31 and a guide path 32b that communicates with the guide plate 32a and guides the specimen containers 1 to a carry-out conveyor ~~33~~. The carry-out conveyor ~~33~~ is made of, e.g., rubber and automatically carries the specimen containers 1 outside the box from the guide section 32.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 9, line 18, as follows:

When a specimen container 1 is lifted up in an upright position, its top end contacts the bottom end of the guide plate 32a that is inclined. The center of gravity of the specimen container 1 is therefore inclined toward the inside of the box 10. Consequently, the specimen container 1 drops again toward the bottom of the box 10. Only one specimen container 1 is placed on the top end of the lifting plate 21. Thus, only one specimen container 1, which is lifted

up lying on its side, is discharged outside the box through the outlet 31. The discharged specimen container 1 reaches the carry-out conveyor ~~33~~ through the guide path 32b. The specimen containers 1 that have reached the carry-out conveyor ~~33~~ are automatically carried one by one outside the box 10 by the carry-out conveyor ~~33~~. The above carry-out operation is performed each time the lifting plate 21 moves up and down.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 12, line 10, as follows:

a container carry-out mechanism ~~30~~ including a carry-out conveyor ~~33~~ to automatically carry out the specimen containers 1 discharged through the outlet 31,

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 13, line 6, as follows:

[2] The automatic tube-type specimen container supply apparatus according to above item [1], further comprises an auxiliary plate 22 mounted on one side of the lifting plate 21 such that the auxiliary plate 22 is slidable up and down relative to the lifting plate 21, and the auxiliary plate 22 has a top end with a tapered surface T2 that descends toward an outside of the container storing box 10, the top end of the auxiliary plate 22 being flush with that of the lifting plate ~~2221~~ when the lifting plate descends and being located in a lower level than that of the lifting plate 21 when the lifting plate 21 ascends.